



The Challenges of School Management to Implementing Inclusive Education in Secondary Schools, in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Every human being has the right to receive education regardless of circumstance and whatever condition it is Born in the world. All countries in the world have an obligation to ensure that all people can receive equal education no matter what. Education acts as a unique instrument which is utilised to influence the world as it endorses social transformation among different societal groups. Inclusive education is an approach that aims to ensure all students, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, have access to quality education in mainstream classrooms. It promotes the idea that diversity enriches the learning experience and that every student can learn and succeed when provided with the right support and resources. This article explores the challenges faced by school management in implementing inclusive education. It examines the systemic, institutional, and social barriers that hinder the effective integration of students with diverse needs within mainstream classrooms. Key issues identified include inadequate resources, lack of training for educators, and insufficient support from policy frameworks. The study also highlights the role of school leadership in fostering an inclusive culture and the importance of collaboration among stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and community organizations. By analyzing case studies and best practices, the article aims to provide actionable insights for school administrators to overcome these challenges and enhance inclusive educational practices.

Key words: Inclusive education, school management

1.0 Introduction

Education is the very initial step to access the Contemporary world (Kaya & Akdemir, 2016). Access to education is recognized as a fundamental Human right and an instrument for releasing other Human rights (Meseret, 2013). Every human being has the right to receive education regardless of circumstance and whatever condition it is Born in the world. All countries in the world have an obligation to ensure that all people can receive equal education no matter what. Education acts as a unique instrument which is utilised to influence the world as it endorses social transformation among different societal groups. Education today is therefore widely recognized as a fundamental right to every person, regardless of his or her aptitudes or incapacities (Paramanik et al. 2018).

1.1 Background to the study

Education is the very initial step to access the Contemporary world (Kaya & Akdemir, 2016). Access to education is recognized as a fundamental Human right and an instrument for releasing other Human rights (Meseret, 2013). Every human being has the right to receive education regardless of circumstance and whatever condition it is Born in the world. All countries in the world have an obligation to ensure that all people can receive equal education no matter what. Education acts as a unique instrument which is utilised to influence the world as it endorses social transformation among different societal groups. Education today is therefore widely recognized as a fundamental right to every person, regardless of his or her aptitudes or incapacities (Paramanik et al. 2018).

Inclusive education was first introduced from an international perspective at the Salamanca World Conference in 1994 in Spain which included international papers on special needs Children (Ainscow & Cesar, 2006). It is universally recognized that the main objective of Education is to provide quality education to all children. This draws global attention to the fact that 'Education for All' (EFA) is a fundamental human right which cannot be realised without enabling all people who have disabilities to access basic quality education (UNESCO, 2001) as Cited by (Muti sya, 2010). Inclusive education is based on the fact that all children and young People, despite different cultural, social and learning backgrounds, should have equivalent learning opportunities in all kinds of schools (UNESCO, 2008).

In the last decade a number of International human rights instruments have long established the right to education for all. This is evidently outlined within the UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009) beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, moving to the

Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Convention on the Right of the Child (1989), the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity in Cultural Expressions (2005), and The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

The term Inclusion “embodies the concept of all children being educated in common settings with their age-matched peers” (Sokal & Katz, 2015, p.43). The last three decades, global dialogues have commonly focused on the inclusion of learners with disabilities into regular classrooms (Pit-ten Cate et al, 2018). Inclusive education therefore is regarded as one means towards social justice and social inclusion as considerable progress to attain the EFA initiative (Mmbuji, 2017).

The Ministry of Education in Kenya (2008) National Report on Development of Education, claims that Kenya has embraced inclusive education that Provides quality education to all children, youth and adults. The report further insisted that in its Commitment to international conventions and agreements, the government of Kenya is committed to provide quality education and related services to all, with particular emphasis to marginalised groups, especially girl child and those with special needs. Following this ratification, the Kenyan Government has domesticated the same through legislative and policy Pronouncements.

These legislations included; the Constitution of Kenya (1962), Educational Act (1968), Child Act (2001), which committed the Government to provision of at least 12 years Of compulsory and continuous schooling to all Kenyan children including those CWDs (Ramtu, 2014). The recently launched Special Needs Education (SNE) Policy emphasised on the need of the government of Kenya to implement inclusive education as a viable means of achieving EFA and millennium development goals (Ministry of Education, 2009).

The Tanzania National Strategy for Inclusive Education endeavours to promote, safeguard and ensure effective and equitable participation of all learners with special educational needs in inclusive education at all levels without discrimination or exclusion, and based on their inherent equality with their peers. In that respect, and consistent with the Salamanca Statement Articles 6, 7 and 8, it adheres to and advance among others to principles that , all learners should learn together, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have and Inclusive learning settings must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their learners.

Tanzania Started implementing inclusive education in early 1990s and the process has involved a number of government Decisions, resulting in policy development, legislative and programmatic interventions that increasingly rules out exclusion and create environments supportive of inclusion educational settings. Overtime, the implementation of Inclusive education in Tanzania has constituted delivery of education for learners with special educational needs through the special education approach, integrated education approach and the contemporarily pioneered inclusive Education approach. Purpose of basic education according to Government regulation number 28 year 2000, chapter II article 3 is to provide basic ability to learners to develop their life as a person, member of society, citizen and member of human being and prepare learners to follow secondary education. School management became the problem of almost all schools of inclusion in public Schools.

In Tanzania, awareness of inclusive education is not clear to the majority of the citizens, including regular teachers who view it as a complicated term. On top of that, most of the regular teachers are not well prepared to facilitate teaching in inclusive classes (Kapinga, 2014). The study revealed some barriers to the realisation of inclusive education for, for example, the disadvantages of children's, poor school attendance or their general unpreparedness for school, (Zelina, 2020).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The school management plays a big role in implementing inclusive education. Inclusive education in secondary schools in Tanzania has been observed to be implemented under the context where infrastructures of different secondary schools do not allow the implementation of curriculum successfully. Inclusion aims at ensuring that all children have access to an appropriate, relevant, affordable and effective education within their community (Peter & Nderitu, 2014). Tanzania adopted inclusive education and the government has attempted several initiatives to enhance the practice of inclusive education in the country such as increasing the number of inclusive schools (Tungaraza, 2018). There are some schools in Tanzania under the auspices and stewardship of the government that try to offer inclusive education under the same circumstances. Despite these efforts made by these schools under the support of the government, there are still a lot of complaints from most of the marginalised groups in accessing education and making positive academic progress under inclusive settings. This study therefore, aims to assess the contribution of school management in implementing inclusive education to the performance of the students in secondary schools in Tanzania.

2. Materials and methods

The study was conducted in Tanzania, in Njombe region at Wanging'ombe district. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research approach with a descriptive survey design. Ten (10) public secondary schools were involved in the study, targeted population was (120) respondents. Whereas, ten(10) head teachers, ten(10) academic teachers and (100) teachers were involved. This study employs both purposive sampling (non-probability) and simple random sampling (probability). Therefore, purposive sampling used for heads of schools and academic teachers, also simple random sampling was used for teachers. This study used two methods of data collection which were interview and questionnaire, as follows. The study employed semi-structured interviews in gathering information from the secondary schools head teachers and academic teachers. The study applied both open and close-ended questionnaires to collect data. Questionnaire provides a valid measure of research questions also; the questionnaire was administered to teachers

3. FINDINGS

The researcher intended to identify the challenges facing the school management on implementing inclusive education.

Table 1: Challenges facing the school management in implementing inclusive education in secondary schools.

Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage%
The school management has sufficient resources to effectively implement inclusive education	Strong disagree	27	27.0
	Disagree	40	40.0
	Strong agree	23	23.0
	Agree	10	10.0
	Total	100	100.0
Teachers and staff are receive adequate training and professional development on inclusive education practices	Strong disagree	30	30.0
	Disagree	29	29.0
	Strong agree	20	20.0
	Agree	21	21.0
	Total	100	100.0
The school provides adequate support to meet the needs of all students	Strong disagree	23	23.0
	Disagree	33	33.0
	Strong agree	25	25.0
	Agree	19	19.0
	Total	100	100.0
school administration is fully committed to implement The inclusive education policies and practices	Strong disagree	30	30.0
	Disagree	34	34.0
	Strong agree	16	16.0
	Agree	20	20.0
	Total	100	100.0
Parents actively involved and support in the schools efforts to implement inclusive education	Strong disagree	36	36.0
	Disagree	32	32.0
	Strong agree	17	17.0
	Agree	15	15.0
	Total	100	100.0
The schools physical infrastructure and learning environment are adequately adapted to accommodate students with diverse needs	Strong disagree	26	26.0
	Disagree	38	38.0
	Strong agree	19	19.0

	Agree	17	17.0
	Total	100	100.0
There are significant cultural and attitudinal barriers within the school community that hinder the implementation of inclusive education	Strong disagree	18	18.0
	Disagree	16	16.0
	Strong agree	27	27.0
	Agree	39	39.0
	Total	100	100.0

Source: field data (2024)

From the table above the data provided reflects responses to a survey question about whether the school management has sufficient resources to effectively implement inclusive education. Here's a breakdown of the results. Strongly Disagree (27 respondents, 27.0%): A significant portion of respondents (27%) believe that the school management does not have sufficient resources to effectively implement inclusive education. Disagree (40 respondents, 40.0%): The largest group of respondents (40%) disagree with the statement, indicating that they feel the school management lacks adequate resources for inclusive education. Agree (23 respondents, 23.0%): About a quarter of the respondents (23%) agree that the school management does have sufficient resources for inclusive education. Strongly Agree (10 respondents, 10.0%): A smaller portion (10%) strongly agree that the resources are sufficient.

Overall:

The majority of respondents (67%, combining "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree") feel that the school management does not have enough resources for inclusive education. Only 33% of respondents (combining "Agree" and "Strongly Agree") believe that the resources are sufficient. Overall, the responses suggest that there is a prevalent perception of inadequacy in the resources provided for inclusive education by the school management. This indicates a potential area for improvement or increased support to better facilitate inclusive practices in the school.

From the table above the data provided represents responses to a survey question about the adequacy of training and professional development on inclusive education practices. Here's a breakdown of the responses. Strongly Disagree: 30 respondents (30.0%), disagree: 29 respondents (29.0%), 21 respondents (21.0%), Strongly Agree 20 respondents (20.0%).

Interpretation summary:

A combined total of 59% of respondents (30% strongly disagree + 29% disagree) believe that teachers and staff do not receive adequate training and professional development on inclusive education practices. This indicates a significant concern about the current level of training and development in this area. Only 41% of respondents (21% agree + 20% strongly agree) feel that the training and professional development are adequate. This relatively lower percentage suggests that there is some acknowledgment of adequacy but it does not reflect a majority consensus. The overall sentiment leans towards dissatisfaction with the current state of training and professional development on inclusive education practices. The majority feel that there is room for improvement in how teachers and staff are prepared for inclusive education.

In summary, the data suggests that the majority of respondents are not satisfied with the level of training and professional development provided on inclusive education practices, highlighting a potential area for improvement.

From the table above the data provided reflects the distribution of responses to a statement about the adequacy of support provided by a school to meet the needs of all students. Here's a breakdown of what the respondents and percentages indicate. Strongly Disagree (23 responses, 23.0%), 23% of respondents strongly believe that the school does not provide adequate support for all students. Disagree (33 responses, 33.0%), 33% of respondents disagree with the statement, meaning they feel the support provided by the school is inadequate, though not as strongly as those who strongly disagree. Agree (19 responses, 19.0%), 19% of respondents agree that the school provides adequate support for all students, though this is a minority viewpoint.

Strongly Agree (25 responses, 25.0%), 25% of respondents strongly believe that the school does provide adequate support for all students.

Summary:

The majority of respondents (56% combined from "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree") feel that the school does not meet the needs of all students adequately. A smaller portion of respondents (44% combined from "Agree" and "Strongly Agree") believe that the support is adequate. The most common

response is "Disagree" (33%), indicating a notable sentiment that the support provided is insufficient. This suggests that there might be significant room for improvement in the school's support mechanisms according to the respondents

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Summary Interpretation

Overall Dissatisfaction: The majority of respondents (56% combined from "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree") feel that the school does not meet the needs of all students adequately. A smaller portion of respondents (44% combined from "Agree" and "Strongly Agree") believe that the support is adequate. The most common response is "Disagree" (33%), indicating a notable sentiment that the support provided is insufficient. This suggests that there might be significant room for improvement in the school's support mechanisms according to the respondents.

From the table above the data provided appears to reflect a survey or assessment of opinions regarding the commitment of school administration to implementing inclusive education policies and practices. Here's a breakdown of what the percentages indicate. Strongly Disagree (30%), 30% of respondents feel that the school administration is not committed at all to implementing inclusive education policies and practices. This suggests a significant portion of the respondents believe there is a lack of effort or seriousness in adopting inclusive practices. Disagree (34%), 34% of respondents are somewhat critical, but not as strongly as those who strongly disagree. They believe the administration is not particularly committed, though they might see some effort or intention. Agree (20%), 20% of respondents believe that the school administration is indeed committed to implementing inclusive education policies and practices. They see some level of dedication and effort from the administration. Strongly Agree (16%), 16% of respondents feel very positive about the administration's commitment, suggesting they believe the school is highly dedicated to and effectively implementing inclusive education policies.

Summary

Majority Perspective: A majority (64%) of respondents (30% strongly disagree + 34% disagree) feel that the school administration's commitment to inclusive education is lacking or insufficient. **Minority Perspective:** A minority (36%) of respondents (20% agree + 16% strongly agree) view the administration's commitment as either adequate or highly effective. This distribution suggests there's a mixed perception among stakeholders regarding the school's dedication to inclusive education. The larger proportion of respondents expressing disagreement might indicate areas where the administration could improve its efforts, communication, or implementation strategies related to inclusive education policies.

From the table above the survey results reflect varying levels of agreement about the involvement and support of parents in the schools' efforts to implement inclusive education. Here's a breakdown of the responses. Strongly Disagree (36%). A significant portion of respondents (36%) feels that parents are not actively involved or supportive in the implementation of inclusive education. This suggests that a substantial group perceives a lack of parental engagement or commitment to these educational initiatives. Disagree (32%). Another considerable segment (32%) also expresses disagreement, although perhaps to a lesser extent. This indicates that while these respondents may see some level of parental involvement, they do not believe it is sufficiently strong or effective. Agree (15%) A smaller percentage (15%) agrees that parents are actively involved and supportive. This suggests that a minority of respondents sees a positive level of parental engagement in the schools' efforts. Strongly Agree (17%). A slightly larger portion (17%) strongly agrees that parents are effectively involved and supportive. This reflects a belief that, for some, there is a noteworthy level of parental commitment and participation in promoting inclusive education.

Overall, the results indicate a mixed perception of parental involvement in inclusive education efforts. While some respondents believe that parents are actively contributing and supporting these initiatives, a larger percentage feels that parental involvement is either lacking or insufficient. This mixed feedback highlights the need for schools to possibly enhance strategies for engaging parents more effectively in supporting inclusive education practices.

From the table above the survey responses about the adequacy of the school's physical infrastructure and learning environment in accommodating students with diverse needs reveal a range of opinions. Here's a breakdown. Strongly Disagree (26.0%). A quarter of the respondents believe that the school's infrastructure and learning environment are not at all suited to meet the needs of students with diverse requirements. This group may feel that the facilities are inadequate or that there are significant barriers preventing full accessibility or inclusivity. Disagree (38.0%). Nearly 40% of respondents also think that the infrastructure and environment fall short of accommodating diverse needs. This indicates a considerable portion of people feel that while there might be some attempt to cater to diverse needs, it is insufficient or lacking in several areas. Agree (17.0%). About 17% of respondents believe that the school's physical infrastructure and learning environment are adequately adapted to accommodate diverse student needs. This group recognizes some level of adequacy in the current setup but it's a minority view. Strongly Agree (19.0%). The smallest group, at 19%, strongly agrees that the school's facilities and environment effectively accommodate diverse needs. This indicates that this portion of the respondents is particularly satisfied with how well the school meets the needs of students with various requirements.

Overall, the majority of responses indicate dissatisfaction or concern about the adequacy of the school's infrastructure and learning environment in supporting diverse needs. Only a minority of respondents feel that the current provisions are sufficient or exceptional. This feedback suggests that there might be significant room for improvement in making the school's environment more inclusive and accessible for all students.

From the table above the survey responses reveal a range of opinions about the existence of cultural and attitudinal barriers that impede the implementation of inclusive education within the school community. Here's a breakdown of the responses. Strongly Disagree (18%). A minority of respondents (18%) do not believe that significant cultural and attitudinal barriers exist within the school community. They may feel that the environment is already quite inclusive or that any existing issues are minimal. Disagree (16%): Another small group (16%) disagrees with the notion that significant barriers are present. This group might acknowledge some challenges but likely views them as not particularly severe or widespread. Agree (39%). A significant portion of respondents (39%) agree that there are cultural and attitudinal barriers affecting the implementation of inclusive education. This indicates a strong perception among these respondents that such barriers are indeed problematic and may be impacting the effectiveness of inclusive practices. Strongly Agree (27%). A considerable number of respondents (27%) strongly agree that significant barriers exist. This group is the most convinced that cultural and attitudinal issues are major obstacles to achieving inclusive education, suggesting a deep concern about the current state of inclusivity within the school community. Overall, the majority of respondents (66%) acknowledge the presence of significant barriers to inclusive education, with 27% strongly feeling that these barriers are severe. This indicates a prevalent concern about how cultural and attitudinal factors are impacting the ability to effectively implement inclusive education practices.

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In reference of the above objective stated as the challenges facing the school management towards the implementation of inclusive education, one interviewee said that;

Schools often lack the necessary resources such as specialised teaching materials and infrastructures modifications to support students with special needs, also there may be insufficient funding to provide additional support staff, such as special education teachers or idea (interviewee, 2024).

Another interviewee added that

The standard curriculum in secondary schools is often rigid and not easily adaptable to the diverse needs of all learners. This rigidity can make it difficult to modify lessons or assessment to accommodate students with varying abilities (interviewee, 2024).

Also, another interviewee added that

Classrooms are overcrowded making it challenging for teachers to provide individualised attention to students who require additional support. Overcrowding can also exacerbate issues related to classroom management and the effective implementation of inclusive practices. (Interviewee, 2024).

4.0 Discussion of Findings

The study intended to state out the challenges facing the school management in implementing inclusive education in secondary schools. The finding shows that implementing inclusive education in secondary schools presents various challenges for school management, which have been documented by various researchers. One of the main challenges in implementing inclusive education is the gap between policy and practice. While many countries have adopted inclusive education policies, the translation of these policies into effective practices remains problematic. According to Ainscow and Miles (2008) school leaders often struggle with interpreting and applying inclusive policies within their specific contexts, leading to inconsistent implementation across schools. Mitchell (2015) also highlights the difficulty in ensuring that inclusive education policies are adequately supported by legislative frameworks and funding. Without proper support, schools may lack the guidance and resources needed to effectively implement inclusive education. Adequate resources are essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education, yet many schools face challenges in this area. UNESCO (2009) reports that the lack of sufficient financial resources is a major impediment to the provision of necessary support services, such as special education teachers, counsellors and assistive technologies. Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010) argue that without proper resource allocation, schools cannot create the necessary conditions for inclusion, such as reducing class sizes or providing individualised support. Societal attitudes towards disability and inclusion can also pose challenges. Slee (2011) notes that negative perceptions and stereotypes about students with disabilities often persist among

educators, parents and students themselves creating barriers to inclusive education. These attitudes can result in resistance to inclusion from various stakeholders, making it difficult for school management to implement inclusive practices. Lalvani (2013) further points out those societal attitudes can influence school culture, impacting the willingness of staff and students to embrace inclusive education. The physical infrastructure of schools is another critical area where challenges arise. Majoko (2016) highlights that many schools are not physically accessible to students with disabilities, lacking features such as ramps, elevators and accessible bathrooms. This inadequacy not only affects student's physical access to education but also their psychological well-being and sense of belonging. Sharma and Desai (2002) argue that even when schools attempt to make infrastructural changes, they often face financial constraints or a lack of expertise in designing inclusive environments

By concluding the challenges of implementing inclusive education in secondary schools are multifaceted and require a comprehensive approach from school management. Addressing these challenges involves not only aligning policies with practice but also ensuring that teachers are adequately prepared, resources are properly allocated, societal attitudes are positive and infrastructure is accessible. Collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators and communities are essential to overcoming these barriers and achieving true inclusivity in education.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of inclusive education in secondary schools faces a myriad of challenges that significantly hinder effective practices. The research indicates that inadequate resources, insufficient training for staff, lack of commitment from school administration and limited parental involvement all contribute to a challenging environment for inclusive education. Furthermore, physical infrastructure and cultural barriers exacerbate these issues, making it difficult for schools to create a genuinely inclusive atmosphere. The data suggests a pressing need for systematic changes to address these shortcomings, ensuring that inclusive education policies are not only established but actively implemented.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Recommendations for Action

To effectively address the challenges identified, school management should prioritize resource allocation and professional development. This includes securing funding for specialized resources and training programs that empower teachers with the necessary skills to implement inclusive practices. Additionally, fostering a culture of collaboration among educators, parents and the community is essential. Schools should engage parents in the process, providing opportunities for involvement and support that can enhance the overall effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives. Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms should also be established to monitor progress and adapt strategies as needed.

6.2 Recommendations for Further Studies

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies that examine the impact of targeted interventions on the implementation of inclusive education. This could include assessing the effectiveness of specific training programs or resource allocations over time. Additionally, exploring the perspectives of various stakeholders such as students with disabilities, parents and community members can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the barriers to inclusion. Investigating best practices from schools that have successfully implemented inclusive education can also yield valuable insights that can be shared across the educational landscape. Such studies would contribute to a deeper understanding of how to overcome the existing challenges and foster a more inclusive educational environment.